



# **RHODE ISLAND COMMISSION ON WOMEN AND GIRLS**

## **MINUTES**

FULL COMMISSION MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 12, 2016  
6:30 PM  
STATE HOUSE  
2<sup>nd</sup> FLOOR SENATE LOUNGE

**Attendance:** Betty Bernal, Senator Hanna Gallo, Christina Hoefsmit, Dr. Eileen Kwesiga, Lisa Middleton, Tejal Tarro, Kathleen Wilson.

**Absent:** Kimberly Brito, Representative Doreen Costa, Seema Dixit, Maribeth Calabro, Carol Anne Costa, Lisa D'Agostino, Adriana Dawson, Elizabeth Francis, Senator Gayle Goldin, Stephanie Gonzalez, Representative Joy Hearn, Linda Mahoney, Randy Martinez, Representative Maureen Messier, Senator Elaine Morgan, Barbara Wong.

### *Call to Order*

Chair Tejal Tarro called the session to order at 6:30 pm.

### *Chair Update, ROI Updates & Open Strategy Discussion*

Tejal Tarro provided the Commission with a recap of events since June. Bryant University students prepared a case analysis and presentation to the Commission regarding its strategic direction, budgetary needs and issues facing Rhode Island women and girls. Vision 20/20 is assisting with the development and execution of the pay equity program while the Commission focuses on strategy. A four hour strategy meeting occurred on August 1<sup>st</sup>, during which time the Commission identified its future vision. It was discovered that there is no central agency in Rhode Island that is the convener for women's issues or agendas, and that the Commission may be able to serve in that capacity. The power of the Commission lies in the access to the community, government and legislature, which can be used to establish a statewide coalition. Tejal drafted a response to the Massachusetts fair pay bill for the Governor and met with the Commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women.

During the passage of the fair pay bill, the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women served as a convener in order to bring stakeholders together, obtain feedback and buy-in, and to centralize ideas. The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women strategized to have a targeted commissioner at each stakeholder session. It took the MA commission more than two years to achieve the fair pay bill, but they eventually obtained broad support and buy-in. The RI Commission developed some similar ideas during the August strategy session. The Raising Our Impact (ROI) group met during the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of August, and the minutes and key decisions from that meeting were previously circulated. Four focus

areas were agreed upon, as we a general design focus on what would create change, what is doable, and what is effective. The program will eventually evolve to include rewards and recognition. The Commission must prepare a presentation for the Governor's Office, and a timeline was discussed and volunteers were solicited.

The New England Women's Policy Initiative (NEWPI) conference is coming up on November 18<sup>th</sup>, and Tejal would like as many Commissioners in attendance as possible. Rhode Island is tasked with participating on the equal pay panel. Tejal also recently met with the acting Chairs of Rhode Island NOW and the Women's Fund and provided the Commission with an update of those meetings. Various Commissioners volunteered to assist on projects related to the next steps in building the infrastructure to serve as a convener. Tejal closed the meeting at 7:30 pm.